



Eagle Rock

Its history and legends



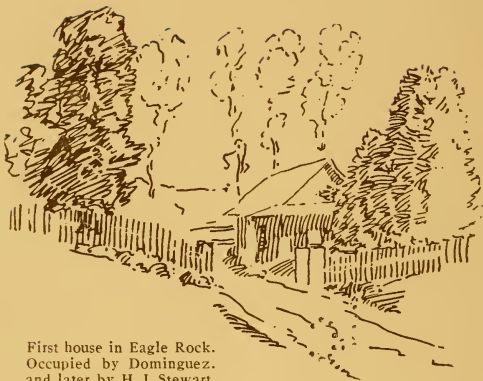
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" Eagle Rock



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First house in Eagle Rock.
Occupied by Dominguez.
and later by H. J. Stewart.

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History

Nestling among the foot hills, about six miles North of Los Angeles, is Eagle Rock Valley. It lies near the center of the old San Rafael Rancho which was granted to Marino de la Verdugo in 1784 and confirmed to his son Jose in 1798. In 1828 Jose left it to his children, Julio and Catalina. A United States patent was granted in 1882. This Rancho was later subdivided into the Dreyfus, Beaudry and Glassell and Chapman tracts.

The name Eagle Rock, so called from its resemblance of its shadow to the "bird of freedom," was long known among the Indians and used to identify the valley, but the Spanish gave it the name of Piedro Gordo, or fat rock.

A small tract of two acres near the rock was owned by a Mexican named Dominguez, but later by H. J. Stewart, a Scotchman who rebuilt the house in 1884, and lived in it several years. As far as known, this was the first permanent house in Eagle Rock Valley, and remained till 1912.

With the march of civilization, the one time sheep pasture developed into a cluster of small ranches. Cacti and sage brush gave place to orange orchards and tomato fields. Trails became highways and the old picturesque pack-horse yielded in favor of the electric car and motor.

The Canyon, with its gnarled sycamores, stately oaks, cottonwoods and willows, its carpet of wild-flowers, its bubbling spring and running brook, is now Huntington Park, still beautiful, but the charm that was, is gone.

Strangers have found the little Valley in the hills and the herder's hut has become a bungalow, the ranch house, a handsome residence.

'Tis said, the Mission Fathers sometimes used the trail through Eagle Rock Valley when going from San Fernando to San Gabriel.



Once did the stumbling savage wend
His weary way
Across this verdant valley fair
To learn to pray.

Legend

In the days before Verdugo owned the "Valley of the San Raphael Hills," long before the Spaniards called the great boulder the "Fat Rock," long, long before the people of the San Gabriel Valley knew of "The Pass of Eden," a large band of Indians camped afar down the plain toward the sunset.

The warriors lolled on the ground and told stories of combat and victory to the young men, while the squaws scratched in the soil or lugged logs for the wigwam fire, carrying their black-eyed papooses on their backs.

One little baby only lay on a skin and gazed upward at the soaring birds in the sky.

Suddenly, in one mighty circle, an eagle dropped upon it and, seizing it in its talons, arose swiftly and flew eastward toward the great rock. Soon the whole band aroused, were chasing the huge bird and shooting their arrows. But they could not kill him, and with shriekings and howlings they fell upon the earth, cursing him and calling on the Sun to aid them. "Let his shadow not pass the gray rock! Let him crush himself against it and turn to stone upon it!" they cried. 'Twas done. Dropping the infant unhurt below, he dashed against the rock, and the image there is the imprint of his huge body.

Yet, for many years, these birds of prey lived in the caves below the shadow, guarding the ghost on the face of the rock, and bold indeed, were the robber pirates who dared to hide their booty, as many did, in the depths of these caverns.



Early
home of
Julio Ve

The Redman's fields once yielded
 Their wealth in wool and grain
 To searching Spaniards labors
 Their hopes and prayers were vain.



Now, orchards
 And home
 Begem the val
 Time! Ke



Then cultured palm and pepper
Replaced the natural oak
And mansions fair were marking
The trails that wild feet broke.



et are falling,
happy men
smiling face,
pure! Amen.



When I'm coming to this Valley
 (Which I love above all others,
Looks to me so grand and lordly,
 Looks to me so sweet and homely.)
When I'm coming from the city,
 Tho' it be a town of Angels,
That old eagle waves a welcome,
 Seems to meet half way my coming.

And when I leave this spot I treasure,
 Looking back on homes and gardens,
On the bungalows and houses,
 On the hills and orange orchards,
He seems politely winging—
 Just a brief farewell at leaving,
Like some fine old host, whose parting
 Leaves an aching for returning.

To An Old Sycamore

Alone he stands!
An old brave warrior
Of a noble band
Whose strength and beauty
Graced this wondrous land.



Defiant he views
Death-dealing onslaughts
Wrought by fire and greed
And crowing inroads
Of a city's need.

Sadly he bends
Toward haunting remnants
Lost in char or mold
Of mighty brethren
Once as grand and bold.

Live, Grand old Man!
'Til careless mankind
Learn the mighty truth
That shame and sorrow
Follow lack of ruth.



To the Rock Birds

God called the watchful wild-birds
To mark this charming land,
The eagle from the mountain,
The pelican from the strand.

When wistful eye was lifted
To Him who never fails,
It, passing, caught the beacons
Which drew men to these vales.

Eagle Rock Valley

A Memory

I am longing for that valley,
I am homesick for those
hills;
And afar a voice is calling me
the while.
Oh, my dream is of the shadows
Falling 'thwart the fields of
grain,
And of hollows where the
golden poppies smile.



I am cold without that sun-
shine;
And no birds so sweetly sing
As the songsters that wake
joyful echoes there.
Just the living of each day
Is a rapture passing words,
In the magic of that opales-
cent air!

I can feel the canyon's thral-
dom;
And my wearied eyes would
rest
On the gray, poetic eucalyptus
tree;
On the wide-winged, soaring
eagle,
Nature's warden of my vale,
Poised forever o'er it, gazing
to the sea.

How I love that long grade
sloping,
To the pensive sunset west,
Where the distant hill-tops
soften in its light.
Oh, the charm that so en-
tranced me
Holds my heart a captive still,
As my soul flies back to
Eagle Rock tonight.



We are indebted to Mrs. Sadie Bowman Metcalf for the beautiful couplet on the cover of this little book and to Sara Evans Letchworth for "A Memory," reprinted by permission of "Town and Country."

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